

joined with Sandusky Memorial Hospital in 1985 to create Firelands Community Hospital, has cared for generations of Sandusky area families. It gives me great pleasure today to commemorate the hospital's 125th anniversary and its long tradition of providing quality health care to the community.

The hospital can trace its roots to 1876, when Wilborforce Farr, the minister of Grace Church, Sandusky, and other community leaders founded Good Samaritan Hospital, a place where everyone could receive health care, regardless of their financial or social situation. For the past 125 years, the hospital has played a vital role in the lives of Sandusky area residents.

In 1985, Firelands Community Hospital was established through the union of Good Samaritan and Sandusky Memorial Hospitals. At the time the merger of these two institutions was considered a bold, but necessary move. The federal government's push to lower health care costs was forcing hospitals to reconsider how they did business. Those who did not adapt to the changing health care climate would suffer serious financial trouble.

Although the decision to consolidate was not an easy one, the Board of Trustees and Professional Staffs of both hospitals had the foresight and initiative to put the needs of the community first. Their efforts provided the foundation for Firelands Community Hospital's role as one of the area's leading comprehensive health care systems.

Today, Firelands Community Hospital continues to provide new and innovative services and programs to meet the needs of the Sandusky area community. More than 7000 inpatients and 250,000 outpatients are served annually at four Sandusky facilities. In recent surveys, Firelands has been rated the best in Erie County for quality of physician care, personal care and attention, most modern technology, physical environment and range of services.

For the past one hundred twenty-five years Sandusky, area residents have entrusted their health care needs to Firelands Community Hospital, and I am confident they will continue to do so for generations to come.

#### TRIBUTE TO ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL

### HON. ASA HUTCHINSON

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 25, 2001*

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Rogers High School and its participants in the "We the People . . . . The Citizen and the Constitution" national finals.

I am pleased to recognize the class from Rogers High School who represented Arkansas in the national competition. The outstanding young people who participated are: David Clay, Jessica Diaz, Mitch Dinowitz, Marcus Emerson, Kenni Floyd, Haris Hasic, Jared Janacek, Amanda Lay, Ashley Marcum, Dylan Mory, John O'Connor, Josh Reece, Stephen Reed, Kyle Schoeller, Brian Shook, Bethany Simmons, Luke Siversen, Cody Steussy, Zack Taylor, David Young. The class is coached by Brenda Patton.

"We the People . . . . The Citizen and the Constitution" is the nation's most exten-

sive program dedicated to educating young people about our Constitution. Over 26 million students participate in the program, administered by the Center for Civic Education. The national finals, which includes representatives from every state, simulates a congressional hearing in which students testify as constitutional experts before a panel of judges.

I wish these bright students the best of luck at the "We the People . . . . The Citizen and the Constitution" national finals. They represent the Third District of Arkansas well, and I wish them all the best in their future academic pursuits.

#### THIS YEAR, EARTH DAY MEANS MORE THAN EVER BEFORE

### HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 25, 2001*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday, America celebrated its 31st annual Earth Day. In the past, Earth Day has been a day of both preservation and celebration. The day has symbolized our commitment to preserving the Earth's beauty for the enjoyment of future generations. This year, however, Earth Day means much more. This year, we are not using Earth Day as a catalyst for the creation of new and innovative ways to keep our environment clean and healthy. This year, we are not spending Earth Day talking about reducing air pollution and cleaning up the water we drink. This year, Earth Day is not a celebration of the environmental accomplishments of the past 31 years.

Instead, this year, we are spending Earth Day toe-to-toe with the Bush Administration to simply maintain the status quo of our country's environmental policies. This year, we are spending Earth Day fighting against the special interests of oil and gas companies. This year, we are celebrating Earth Day with a return to the careless and unhealthy environmental practices of the 1970s. This year, Earth Day means more than it has ever meant before.

In the first 100 days of President Bush's term in office, the Administration has sought to eliminate nearly every major environmental advancement of the past twenty years. Whether it is trying to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), failing to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emissions into the air, or halting a plan to lower arsenic levels in drinking water, the Bush Administration has made it clear that it is not serious about protecting our environment.

In Florida, we are facing the relentlessness of the oil and gas industries. As recently as last Sunday, the Bush Administration restated its plan to auction nearly six million acres off of the coast of Florida's Panhandle for the purposes of drilling for oil and natural gas. This is a plan that Floridians have both feared and rejected. Florida has maintained a position that any drilling will not occur within 100 miles of Florida's coast. While Florida's neighboring states have chosen to move forward with offshore drilling programs, the people of Florida have recognized the environmental dangers of offshore drilling and chosen not to move forward with any such program.

Drilling off the coast of Florida's Panhandle could have devastating outcomes. Studies

show that the cost of offshore drilling far outweighs the benefits. The potential for oil spills and life-threatening accidents is there. The construction of oil rigs, combined with continued drilling, will undoubtedly disrupt the marine ecosystem that currently exists. One only has to look at pictures of an oil rig sinking off the coast of Brazil to recognize the real dangers of offshore drilling. Now, the Administration is seeking not only to destroy Florida's already delicate environment, but to do it against the obvious wishes of Florida's people and government.

This year, we must view Earth Day as an opportunity to rally our troops and fight against the special interests that have been dictating environmental roll backs for the past 100 years. If the Administration will not fight against the oil and gas companies, then we must. We have a responsibility to recognize the role that we play in preserving our environment. If we do not recognize and accept this responsibility, then no one will.

#### CONGRATULATING JOHN DIENER

### HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 25, 2001*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Diener for receiving the Award of Distinction from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of California, Davis.

The award is the highest designation given by the college to individuals whose contributions enrich the image and reputation of the college and enhance its ability to provide public service.

Diener earned a degree in agricultural economics in 1974. He worked as a pest control advisor, specializing in viticulture, for six years before beginning a farm operation in 1980. In 20 years his farm grew from 640 acres to 4,500 acres. He began organic production practices and helped develop Greenway Organic Farms.

Diener has supported research and started field studies on reclaiming farmland that suffers from high underground water tables. This sort of research has set the foundation for growers to grow crops on acreage considered too salty. The success of his new farming methods can be seen by the abundant harvesting of crops on land that had previously been considered non-fertile soil.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate John Diener on his Award of Distinction. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating John and wishing him many more years of continued success.

#### COMMENDING THE VIRGIN ISLANDS FRESHWATER ASSOCIATION, INC.

### HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 25, 2001*

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this occasion to commend an outstanding group of Virgin Islanders—Helen George-Newton, Eldra Malone-Drew, Ava Stagger, Carol